Star Trek Red Alert! F.A.Q.
By Matthew Colville

I'm going to take my cue from Zen Faulks, the old L5R rules authority and start by saying; the game is not trying to trick you. If a disk or a rule says a thing, that's what it means. The question I'm asked more than any other is; "The rules say B happens when you do A. What happens when you do A?"

Many of these answers will be clarifications, in which case they are officially official. Any recommendations or errata I suggest are not officially official until they appear in some new version of the rulebook. Even my suggestions need to be playtested, and playtesting goes on until the day we send the game to the printer.

Q: Did you design this game?
A: This is the question I'm asked the most whenever I meet people who play. The answer is no and yes. Christian T. Peterson and Darrell Hardy designed the basic game you're familiar with, the same guys who designed Diskwars. After they made their initial pass, Christian Moore, my boss, went and played the game and offered some changes. Then it was given to me. I changed the rules I thought were broken, made the game as Star Treky as possible, and designed all the disks and wrote the rules. I'm proud to say that of all the Trek projects I worked on for Last Unicorn (12 or so) this was the only one that Paramount approved with no changes first time.

Q: Is there a limit to the number of the same upgrade I can have on a ship?
A: Yes. One. Something that got left out of the game is the keyword "Unlimited." All the 0 cost Security and 1 cost Away Team disks have this keyword. Unlimited means you can have as many of these disks on your ship as your capacity and points will allow. With these two exceptions, there can only be one of each other disk on a given ship. And, of course, only one of each Unique disk in the game. So if you have two pulse phaser upgrades, they have to be on different ships, they cannot be on the same ship.

Q: I'm playing the Ferengi and have Ishka and the Negotiations Agent. What's stopping me from buying the Klingon +2 beam weapon upgrade, and the Federation +2 Beam Weapon upgrade, and the Cardassian +2 Beam Weapon upgrade. . .
A: These disks have been errata'd. They can only buy one of each upgrade subtype. So you can only buy 1 Beam Weapon upgrade, one Structural Upgrade, one Torpedo Upgrade, etc…

Q: What's the maximum speed of a given ship?
A: There wasn't a really good place to stick this in the rules, so we put it under the Control Panel section, in bold. Small ships have a maximum speed of 6, medium ships have a maximum speed of 5, large ships have a maximum speed of 4.

Q: Why are small ships faster than larger ships?
A: All battles in Red Alert happen at impulse speeds. All ships are equally good at going slower than the speed of light. Therefore a small ship should be able to cross the board just as fast as a large ship. To do this, it must flip more times.

Q: This disk says; "Start: 7 points of free away team." Do the disks I buy with these 7 points count toward my capacity?
A: Yes they do. Those are 7 free fleet building points, but whatever you buy with them counts against your ship's capacity.

Q: This disk says; "Start: +2 hull," but another disk says; "+2 shields" without the 'Start:' What's the difference?

A: This is kinda complex. In essence, when you buy the Hull upgrade, a team of guys comes and improves your hull before the game starts. That upgrade remains with you regardless of the status of the upgrade disk. It can be destroyed, or activated or concealed and you still get that +2 to your hull, because the 'Start' in its text means the upgrade happened before you started playing. A shield upgrade, by comparison, means you've got this doohickey on your ship. As long as your upgrade disk is revealed, the doohickey is working and you get the +2. If the disk is destroyed, the doohickey no longer works, and you lose the bonus.

Q: I bought a shield upgrade, do I have to raise shields before I get the benefit of it?

A: Only if you start with the upgrade disk concealed. If it's revealed at the start of play, you gain its benefit from the very beginning.

Q: I lost my shield upgrade! When do I readjust my shields?

A: Only after you issue another Raise Shields order. So if your ship had shields of 4, and you bought a +2 upgrade your shields would be at 6. If you lost the upgrade, your shields would remain at 6. If you then took damage, and issued a Raise Shields order, your shields would only go to 4.

Q: I used Captain Jellico to Attack/Attack. Since he's flipped, do I lose the bonus to beam weapons?

A: No. This is important. Unless an ability has the Activate Crew/Tech (AC/T) order at the beginning of it, or the word "flip" at the end, then it's constant. It always produces its ability even if it's flipped. This holds true for tech disks as well. If someone flips your shield upgrade, it still produces its effect.

Q: When do we check for Initiative?

A: I recommend you do it at the beginning of every turn, not at the beginning of every orders phase. Your Initiative just doesn't change that much over the course of a turn to keep track of.

Q: Do activated crew count toward your initiative?

A: Yes. The rules state that you add up the command of all your revealed crew, not your ready crew. Revealed crew are all the crew not hidden under your 'Concealed Crew and Tech' disk.

Q: Ramming sucks! I want to slam my ship into someone. . .why does it only hurt me, and then only rarely??

A: Because otherwise it'd be extremely unrealistic. If ramming rules worked the way most players wanted them to, you'd see ramming occurring a lot more than makes any sense. Real captains, even Klingon ones, aren't going to sacrifice 1200 of the Empire's finest. They'll fight to the death, in the case of Klingons, or treat with the enemy to spare the crew and take the captain (in Starfleet) but they won't slam their ship into someone else's. So we designed the ramming rules to penalize the player who tries it. In other words, if you know how it works, you'd never do it.

Q: Do I have to declare a target when I fire a torp?

A: No. Having to keep track of which phase a torp was fired on is enough bookkeeping for a game of this complexity.

Q: What happens when a torpedo or another ship runs into a Cloaked ship?

A: This can't happen. Cloaked ships are immune to torpedoes and collisions.

Q: Why can't you shoot down torpedoes?

A: Mainly because we've never seen it done in the show. If you want to play with anti-torp rules, I recommend allowing people to shoot at torps with beam weapons as long as they're in range. Allow a torp to be destroyed by one point of damage.

Q: Why can't you fire torpedoes from your aft port?
A: This is entirely a game-balance issue. If you allow people to shoot torps out the aft bay, then torps become wildly useful. Far more useful than beam weapons. It also changes the way the ships move around the table. Ships no longer move the way we've seen them do in the show, where aft torpedoes are rarely used.

Q: Someone's taken over my ship, but I still have concealed crew onboard. What can I do with them?
A: You control all the concealed crew you own. So even though someone else now controls your ship, you still control the concealed crew onboard because you still own those disks. You can opt to reveal them during Step One, and then try and take your ship back during Step Four.

Q: How much damage do Asteroids and Mines do?
A: You can vary this as you wish, but in general (and for those scenarios that don't otherwise specify) Asteroids do 2 points of damage, Mines do 4. This damage goes directly to your shields, you do not drop disks to determine this damage.

Q: How does Commander Data work?
A: Easy. During Step One, pick another crew disk on your ship. (Special abilities only affect crew on other ships when they specifically say they can.) Data gains the special ability text of that crew member. Not the orders, not the combat value, not the command rating, just the special ability text. He gains that ability until the next Reveal/Conceal step. At that point he can keep his current ability, or pick a new one. Even if the disk he's copying has left the ship or been destroyed, he can just stick with that ability and not change.

Q: The Klingon security officer, Khor'tal, seems kinda cheap.
A: He is. Too cheap. He should be an 8.

Criticals

Q: Weapons Crit says "May not fire Beam Weapon." Does this mean only with a normal attack order, or can I still use my crew's orders?
A: It means in any way at all. Your beam weapon is useless while this critical is in effect.

Q: Shields Crit says "Ship may not use 'Raise Shields' order." If my shields were at full when I took this crit, do they go to zero?
A: No. The shield crit doesn't affect your shield rating, it only affects your ability to issue a Raise Shields order.

Q: With the Shield Crit, can I use a crew disk to execute a Raise Shields order?
A: No.

Q: Life Support crit says; "Crew May Not Be Activated To Perform Orders." But I have a crew disk that I can activate to remove a life support crit. Isn't this guy useless? The Life Support crit prevents me from activating him!
A: No it doesn't. The special ability text (or 'ability text') on your disk is not an Order. Your crew's orders are those little icons in three rows of two columns over on the right of the disk. The special ability of your Crew or Tech disk may require you to execute an AC/T order, but this requirement is not itself an order.